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SUBJECT: UNHCR DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER MEETING WITH THAI  
ON MISSING HMONG MINORS

REF: VIENTIANE 298

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RALPH BOYCE, REASON 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Visiting UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Wendy Chamberlin briefed Ambassador on her March 31 meeting with Thai National Security Council chief General Winai Phattiyakul and MFA Permsec Krit Ganjana-Goonchorn regarding the missing Hmong minors. Following up on her March 29 meetings with Lao officials (reftel), Chamberlin's objective with the Thai was to encourage them to meet the Lao request for an "explanation" of the minors' deportation to Laos in December as a means to reunite the minors with their parents in Thailand.

¶2. (C) Chamberlin reported to Ambassador that she had suggested to Winai and Krit that the Thai call in the Lao Ambassador and provide the explanation and double track that with a call by the Thai Ambassador in Vientiane on the Lao Foreign Ministry. Krit expressed nervousness about including as part of an explanation that the Thai had made a mistake in deporting the minors. He said that if the Lao had harmed the minors, they could claim that the injuries had come during the deportation. According to Chamberlin, Krit also said that the Thai had tried to discuss the issue with the Lao earlier by sending the Thai Ambassador in to the Lao Foreign Ministry. The Lao had rebuffed this effort by "berating" the Thai Ambassador and not letting him deliver his message. Winai also expressed skepticism that a Thai "explanation" would work.

¶3. (C) Chamberlin said she responded to the Thai concerns by saying the two sides should not get into a blame game. She also argued that the situation had changed. Her visit provided an occasion for the two sides to refocus on the Hmong minors, the Lao were no longer insisting on a written "explanation," and the recent conclusion of the Lao Party Congress meant the Lao should now be able to address the minors issue. It was important for the two sides to get beyond the politics and work out a practical solution at the working level.

¶4. (C) Chamberlin said that at the conclusion of the meeting, Krit told her that he did not see a problem with giving the Lao an oral explanation. He said he had the authority to do

it. He added that Winai, who departed early from the meeting, would be all right with MFA delivering an explanation. In response to a question from Chamberlin, Krit said there was no need for the Ambassador to get involved at this stage.

15. (U) Post will follow up with the Thai on this issue.  
BOYCE